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United for Quality Care

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Nethania Garin, LPN  
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District 1199 New England  
Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Committee, my name is Nethania Garin and I have worked as an LPN for the last 3 years. I love my job because it is important to me that I advocate for my patients and give them the sense of being loved and wanted. I love being able to restore their spirit and give them the motivation or push they need to keep moving forward. It's wonderful when I get to see them achieve their goals and obtain their happiness no matter what they have gone through. As an LPN, I provide everything I am asked to provide whether it be providing care, assistance with transfers, obtaining orders from their MD, mental health support, and many other things. I am here today to thank you for the money that was allocated in the last budget to Nursing Homes. It is a great start - we have been able to negotiate some wins for workers - but unfortunately, due to the historic underfunding of this industry, we need more. The pandemic has exposed just how dire the staffing situation in Nursing Homes has become.

We are incredibly understaffed even with the advances that we made last year. Short staffing means that I am unable to dedicate long hours of my time to help improve my patients well being. It means doing jobs outside our job description that we don't get paid for. It means missing my meal breaks. It means not being able to take time for myself, or to spend with my family. It means having to cry in the supply room for 2 minutes and then put on a smile and try to be positive throughout the entire shift just for the well being of my fellow colleagues and patients.

Our residents are cared for by staff whom they trust and open up to. Whether it be the LPN or CNA, they confide in all of us and trust us to attend to their needs and to also help them feel at ease during their stay. Because of short staffing, management is using staffing agencies to cover shifts that should be taken by a full time worker. Sometimes, staffing agency nurses and CNAs are no call no show or they show up and don't do their job. It's frustrating to have to clean up after these agency staff and then get blamed for their errors on your shift. IF owners would invest in the workforce and hire people, we wouldn't have these problems.

I get really frustrated that we are not heard by management. I try to give a helping hand to my fellow CNAs everyday and I give them as much positive verbal feedback as I can for the hard work and dedication that we all give. This should be done by Management everyday on every shift, but isn't. Instead we are blamed and we are under-resourced. We need the supplies and equipment to safely attend to our residents. We need the bosses to pay their employees, not the agencies. We KNOW our residents' needs and give the proper care they need; unlike agencies, who do not give the proper care and only look forward to their check ( they get paid double or triple than regulars). They don't know our residents the way we do.

I appreciate this Committee for recognizing how far behind we were last year, and allocating funding for our wages and benefits, but we are so behind, even that increase isn't attracting new hires. We need funding to increase wages and benefits, and we need investment in the workforce so that people want to work here, and they want to stay because they feel valued and compensated. Please help us.

Thank you for your time.

